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THE GULL



GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 90

NO. 9

NOVEMBER 2005

FOUNDED 1917

Christmas Bird Count Season Has Arrived

Sign up now to participate in Golden Gate Audubon's 2005 Christmas Bird Counts. The Oakland Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be held on Sunday, December 18. The San Francisco CBC will take place on Thursday, December 29. You can join your friends for an enjoyable day in the field, ending with a delicious dinner where we will report results from the field, including the locations of the unusual birds found that day.

Invitations to the two counts have been sent to all those who participated in a count in recent years. Oakland co-compiler Dave Quady urges everyone to reply to their invitations right away. "Early sign-ups really help the compilers ensure that every area is well covered," Dave says. "And all birders are welcome, no matter what their experience level."

This season marks the 106th year of Christmas Bird Counts and also the 65th count in Oakland. Christmas Bird Counts attempt to identify and count the birds within a defined 15-mile-diameter circle during one calendar day. Last year, more than 50,000 participants took part in the 2,000 counts that were held worldwide, including over 110 in California alone. Thanks to the National Audubon Society, the results of all counts since 1900 are accessible at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr/. The data provide a wealth of information about changes in resident bird populations, and are used by researchers and birders alike.



White-crowned Sparrow, one of the species commonly seen on CBC day.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The Oakland count circle extends from Treasure Island northeast to the San Pablo Reservoir in Contra Costa County, and south to St. Mary's College in Moraga and the Oakland International Airport. With its wide variety of habitats, the Oakland count typically produces more than 170 bird species.

BIRD COUNT, continued on page 11

Altamont Decision Falls Short

On September 22, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors renewed 29 permits covering some 3,600 wind turbines at the Altamont Pass Wind Resources Area, allowing the wind companies to continue operating the turbines—and to continue killing thousands of birds each year.

The supervisors voted 4-1 (Gail Steele opposed) to approve the 13-year permits. Golden Gate Audubon joined with the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) and Californians for Renewable Energy (CARE) in early 2004 to appeal the permits, asking the county to take strong steps to reduce the illegal bird kill and pressuring the county to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act by conducting an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Thanks to pressure from Golden Gate Audubon, CBD, and CARE, the supervisors imposed additional conditions on the permits, among them requiring industry to shut down some turbines permanently and some during winter migration season and to implement additional measures to reduce the bird kill.

The new conditions are an improvement over the original permits, which for two decades required absolutely no reduction in bird mortality, despite common knowledge that thousands of birds died each year. Nevertheless, the permits do not go far enough. The turbines kill as many as 4,700 birds annually, including up to 116 state and federally protected Golden Eagles.

ALTAMONT DECISION, continued on page 4

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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRD BOX
415.681.7422

OBSERVATIONS

Bruce Mast observe@goldengateaudubon.org

WEB EDITOR

webeditor@goldengateaudubon.org

GULL EDITORS

Marjone Blackwell marjb@sbcglobal.net
Judith Dunham 510.841.8149

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Elizabeth Murdock 510.843.9912

ECO-OAKLAND PROGRAM MANAGER

Amiko Mayeno 510.635.5533

OFFICE MANAGER

Tara Zuardo 510.843.2222

FIELD TRIPS COORDINATOR

Susan Groves 510.654.5954

HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR

Susanne Shields 415.810.4900

The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 15, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Society membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets the fourth Monday of every month (except August and December) at 7:30 p.m. in the chapter office in Berkeley.

The Gull is published each month except July and August by the Golden Gate Audubon Society. Special third-class postage paid in Oakland, CA. Send address changes to office promptly. The post office does not forward *The Gull*.

The Gull deadline for submissions is five weeks prior to the month of publication.

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Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc.
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
Berkeley, CA 94702

Phone: 510.843.2222 • Fax: 510.843.5351
www.goldengateaudubon.org
ggas@goldengateaudubon.org

Nature Store hours: Monday – Friday, 9–12, 1–5

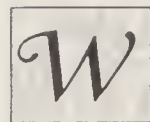
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Plan Now to Support Golden Gate Audubon in the Future



Would you like to help Golden Gate Audubon continue to protect Bay Area birds and their habitats for future generations? With the Bay Area's population expected to continue growing over the next few decades, birds and other wildlife will face an even tougher struggle to survive. Remembering Golden Gate Audubon in your estate planning through a bequest is one way you can help ensure that we will help to conserve places safe for birds for decades to come.

You have several choices of bequests, one of which may work for you:

General Bequest. This is usually a gift of a stated amount. Example: "I give \$10,000 to Golden Gate Audubon."

Specific Bequest. This is a gift of a specific item to a specific beneficiary. Example: "I bequeath my collection of first edition bird books to Golden Gate Audubon."

Residuary Bequest. This is a gift of all the "rest, residue, and remainder" of your estate after all other bequests, debts, and taxes have been paid.

Contingent Bequest. This is a bequest made on condition that a certain event must occur before distribution to the beneficiary. Example: "I give \$50,000 to Golden Gate Audubon, if my sister does not survive me."

Bequests can take the form of cash gifts, stock, insurance policies, or other assets. Before you decide which would be best, you should consult with your attorney, who can advise you about what would be most appropriate for you and your family.

If you decide to name Golden Gate Audubon in your will or trust, here is the language that you and your legal advisor will need to use to ensure that your wishes are fulfilled: "I give, devise, and bequeath to Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc., Berkeley, California [specific amount or percentage of the estate or description of the property] for its general charitable uses and purposes." This is if you intend to make an outright bequest of cash securities or other property by designating a specific dollar amount, a particular asset, or a fixed percentage of your estate to Golden Gate Audubon to be used for general purposes.

If you intend to leave the residue of your assets after other terms of the will have been satisfied: "All the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate, both real and personal, I give to Golden Gate Audubon, Inc., Berkeley, California, for its general charitable uses and purposes."

There are other, more complex planned giving arrangements, such as charitable remainder trusts, that may be appropriate in some cases, and our volunteer estate planning lawyer can discuss these with your attorney if that would be helpful.

We would appreciate your letting us know if you decide to include Golden Gate Audubon in your estate planning, so that we can thank you for your generous support and offer any assistance you might need to complete your plans. We'll have a check-off box for this purpose on your membership renewal form in January, but you can also write or call us anytime to discuss your plans.

We thank all of our members who have already included Golden Gate Audubon in their estate planning. Your planned gifts will have a significant and lasting impact on our efforts to protect Bay Area birds and wildlife.

by Elizabeth Yates McNamee

Member Nominations to the Board of Directors

In 2006, three seats will be open for new elected directors. According to our bylaws, petitions for board candidates must be submitted to the GGA office at least 12 weeks prior to the election, which will take place in mid-May 2006. This means that the deadline for submitting candidate petitions is mid-February. A specific deadline date and guidelines for submitting nominating petitions will appear in the December Gull.

GGA Launches New Census in Eastshore State Park

On a beautiful Saturday morning in late September, more than 50 Golden Gate Audubon volunteers congregated alongside the San Francisco Bay in Berkeley to launch Golden Gate Audubon's exciting new program in Eastshore State Park.

With funds from an anonymous donor (through the San Francisco Foundation) and the California State Parks Foundation, GGA has begun a year-long program to study birdlife through census counts in the 8.5-mile-long shoreline and park uplands and to build public awareness of the park's rich birding opportunities by leading two monthly nature walks.

The day began with a training session for census counters and field trip leaders, led by GGA board member Bob Lewis, who drafted the census protocol and organized the program. Longtime GGA member Steve Granholm, who helped design the protocol, helped conduct the census training. In addition to verbal instructions from Bob and Steve, the census volunteers received illustrated booklets with detailed maps and instructions on how and where to count birds. The park's 2,002 acres of tidelands and 260 acres of uplands have been divided into five census count areas. Beginning in October, five teams of census counters are heading out twice a month with binoculars and scopes to count every bird they see in a two-hour time frame in the five park areas.

At the same time, nature walks are being led by GGA field trip leaders to generate more public interest in the Eastshore State Park, particularly in birding in the park. GGA field trip coordinator Susan Groves has organized a cadre of field trip leaders, who plan and lead walking and bicycling trips throughout the park. The trips are listed in *The Gull*, as well as in other publications, and are posted on the GGA website.

"Golden Gate Audubon is extremely excited to conduct this project—in terms of both our conservation goals and our effort to help Bay Area residents appreciate the park's wonderful wildlife," said executive director Elizabeth Murdock. "Our bird cen-



Bob Lewis introducing volunteers to GGA's new bird count and field trips.

with these wild places. We are thrilled to be undertaking the same kind of project at Eastshore State Park."

Golden Gate Audubon expresses its deep gratitude to the GGA team that have made this project possible, including Bob Lewis, Steve Granholm, Carolyn Kolka, Susan Groves, Judith Dunham, Charlotte Nolan and Tara Zuardo. We couldn't do any of this without our generous funders and the wonderful volunteers who give their time and are out in Eastshore State Park counting birds and leading field trips.

by Marjorie Blackwell

How You Can Help

Complete information on the Eastshore State Park bird count and field trips is available on the GGA website: www.goldengateaudubon.org. Anyone who is interested in participating can find contact information on the web, as well as download descriptions of the project, maps of the park, and data sheets. It's not too late to sign up as a volunteer for this unique project.

Join the 2005 Quail Restore-A-Thon

It's not too late to sign up for this year's Quail Restore-A-Thon. On Saturday, November 12, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Golden Gate Audubon volunteers will restore California Quail habitat in two San Francisco locations: Harding Park Golf Course and the Presidio.

California Quail, California's state bird and San Francisco's city bird, is a species on the verge of extinction in the city due to loss of habitat. Quail once numbered well over a thousand in the city, but the population has declined precipitously. Golden Gate Audubon is dedicated to restoring healthy quail numbers.

You can also help us raise funds by enlisting friends and family members to sponsor your efforts. Or, if you are unable to help in the field, you can sponsor four hours of work by a Golden Gate Audubon volunteer. If you sponsor yourself or another volunteer, or the Golden Gate Audubon volunteer team, at \$10 per hour, the Save the Quail campaign will earn \$40. At \$15 per hour, you will be donating \$60 to the campaign.

Free food and beverages will be provided to all volunteers who join us on November 12. When you sponsor a volunteer at \$25 or above, you receive a free Restore-A-Thon T-shirt or hat. This year, prizes will be given out to volunteers, such as subscriptions to *Birder's World* and *Bay Nature* and admission passes to the California Academy of Sciences and the San Francisco Zoo. Following the restoration work, there will be a potluck picnic in the Presidio for all volunteers and sponsors. So come help the quail and have fun, too! To sign up or make a donation, call 510.843.2222 or email tzuardo@goldengateaudubon.org.

Birdseed and More at Nature Store

As the holidays approach, be sure to take time to visit the Golden Gate Audubon Nature Store, which carries a variety of items that will make inspired gifts for bird-loving family members and friends. Some, like bird feeders, will be great presents for the birds, too.

GGA Supporting Members receive a 10 percent discount on all Nature Store merchandise, and proceeds from the sales fund our conservation and education programs.

The Nature Store has the latest field guides, including the fourth edition of the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America*, and Kenn Kaufman's *Birds of North America*. *Birds of San Francisco and the Bay Area*, *Birding Northern California*, and *Birds of Northern California: An Annotated Field List* are indispensable for local and regional birding. If you want a practical general reference, check out *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior*, accompanied by David Sibley's extraordinary illustrations.

Birding is as much about listening to birds as watching them, and the Nature Store has resources that will help you identify bird calls and songs. "Our Birds: California" software includes vocalizations, as well as photos, maps, and videos, representing 365 birds regularly seen in California. The "Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs: Western Region" CD will introduce you to the calls and songs of more than 550 species.

The many books for children include *How to Draw Birds* and a delightfully illustrated tale, *The Birdwatchers*, along with ever-popular sticker books. There is also a flock of plush birds, among them California Quail, Mourning Dove, and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow—each of which produces an authentic call or song when squeezed.

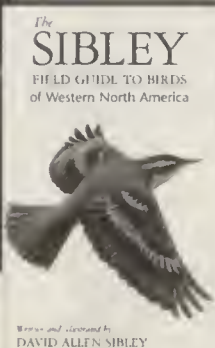
Now that wintering birds are returning in increasing numbers to local backyards, it is time to put out bird feeders and seed.

At the Nature Store, you'll find specialized feeders for holding thistle seed, sunflowers, and suet, plus feeders for our local Anna's Hummingbirds. If squirrels tend to invade your feeders, check out our squirrel-proof feeders. Brushes for scrubbing tube feeders and hummingbird feeders are also in stock.

You might be surprised to discover that the Nature Store's prices for birdseed are among the lowest anywhere in the Bay Area. We have black oil sunflower seeds, sunflower chips, Nyjer thistle, and wild bird Audubon and premium mixes. Wild bird mixes are available in 20- and 40-pound bags, and sunflower seeds start in 25-pound quantities. Thistle is sold in 5- and 20-pound bags.

If you want to show your support for GGA in style, you can purchase a lapel pin, a T-shirt featuring a Least Tern, or a mug for hot beverages. All of these make inexpensive gifts, too.

by Kellie Geldreich,
Golden Gate Audubon Intern



Written and illustrated by
DAVID ALLEN SIBLEY

Golden Gate Audubon Nature Store

2530 San Pablo, Berkeley

510.843.2222

Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

ALTAMONT DECISION, continued from page 1

and hundreds of other protected raptors.

The permits do not include important measures that California's attorney general Bill Lockyer, state and federal regulatory agencies, bird experts, consultants for the California Energy Commission (CEC), and the appellants requested. Recent studies funded by the CEC—and commonly accepted as the best available science on the Altamont bird kill—indicate that the wind industry could reduce bird deaths by at least 50 percent, and the attorney general has concluded that industry can afford to do this without undue financial hardship.

The permits are also riddled with ambiguities that undercut critical measures, such as the creation of a Scientific Review Committee to oversee the project. Finally, the supervisors postponed conducting an EIR for three years. An EIR is essential to reducing bird kills and implementing mitigation that would compensate for the thousands of birds that will be killed by turbines in the future.

How You Can Help

Golden Gate Audubon and the other appellants are assessing whether to challenge the county's permit approvals through legal action. In the coming weeks, you can visit www.goldengateaudubon.org for the latest developments and information about how you can get involved.

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

Peregrine Falcon (\$500 to \$999)

Al & Barbara Peters

Least Tern (\$200 to \$499)

Jean Lucken

Clapper Rail (\$100 to \$199)

Katharine H. Loughman, John A. Sproul (Restore A-Thon)

Gifts (to \$99)

Annette Billingsley and Terry Bergmann, Ann F. Kadyk, Guy Mayes and Nancy Issel-Mayes, Clem Underhill, Rachel Watson-Clark (Clorox Company Foundation Employee Giving Campaign)

In Memory of

Thelma Wiener, LCSW; Suzanne & Astry Banford

In Honor of

Mel McKey's volunteer work; Dr. Jessica Krakow

In-Kind

Sandy McCoy: bookcases & oak desk
Jean Lucken: binoculars

Grants

The Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment; The Alameda Wildlife Refuge

SPEAKER SERIES



Talks in the Speaker Series begin at 7.30 p.m. At 7 p.m., healthful, delicious snacks are served by hospitality coordinator, Susanne Shields. If you would like to suggest food and drinks for meetings or would like to help, call Susanne at 415.810.4900, or email susannekshields@yahoo.com. For information about upcoming events, detailed directions, or updates, see www.goldengateaudubon.org.

Albatross: On the Wings of Antarctic Ocean Wanderers

Ted Cheeseman

San Francisco

Berkeley

*Friday, November 4

Thursday, November 17

From Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" to glimpses off our shores of Laysan Albatross and Black-footed Albatross, we know of albatrosses as visitors from a foreign realm. Naturalist and expedition leader Ted Cheeseman of Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris will present an illustrated lecture describing his experiences with some of the world's most majestic birds. Through his expeditions, Ted frequently travels to the Galápagos and across the Southern Ocean to its sub-Antarctic islands, the heart of prime albatross habitat.

Albatross have been the subject of myth and ocean-faring legend, but it is only with recent study and help from tools such as GPS-telemetry that we are seeing more clearly into their lives. We are now learning how truly magnificent albatrosses are just as many albatross species face sharp declines at the hands of industrial fishing. Ted's program will take you on the wing of an albatross, on an entertaining and educational journey among the world's greatest mariners with beautiful photographs and the most recent bird science.

San Francisco. County Fair Building, San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way. Directions: www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/visiting/page2.html

Berkeley. Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin). Directions: www.northbrae.org/directions.htm

* Change of date from regularly scheduled program

Fall Birding Classes in San Francisco

The second sessions of Joe Morlan's fall evening classes, endorsed by GGA, start in November. Classes meet from 7 to 9:15 p.m. at the Marina Middle School, Room 307, 3500 Fillmore St., San Francisco. Free parking is in the school lot off Bay Street. The instructor may arrange optional field trips on weekends. Slides illustrate all lectures, and the text is *A Field Guide to Birds of North America*, fourth edition, by the National Geographic Society. *The Sibley Guide to Birds* is recommended as an adjunct text for Ornithology II and III. For information call 415.561.1860 or visit the instructor's website at <http://fog.ccsf.edu/~jmorlan/fall05.htm>.

Field Ornithology I, Part B (EA105). Tuesdays, November 1–December 13. Fee: \$130
Introduction to birds and birding, combining basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology, evolution, and behavior.

Field Ornithology II, Part B (EA115). Wednesdays, November 2–December 14. Fee: \$115
In-depth study of the identification and status of North American seabirds, including tubenoses, cormorants and pelicans.

Field Ornithology III, Part B (EA125). Thursdays, November 3–December 15. Fee: \$115
A continuing study of North American land birds including owls and nightjars.

2006 Speaker Series

You won't want to miss the programs in next year's Speaker Series. Be sure to mark your 2006 calendar. Additional details about each talk will appear in future issues of *The Gull* and online at www.goldengateaudubon.org. Remember that there are no programs in December, when the Christmas Bird Count is conducted.

January 13, San Francisco

January 19, Berkeley

Seth Adams, director of land programs, Save Mt. Diablo, on Mt. Diablo and the Diablo Trail

February 10, San Francisco

George Archibald, co-founder of the International Crane Foundation

February 16, Berkeley

Ravinder N.M. Sehgal, PhD, professor at San Francisco State in the ornithology department, on infectious diseases in birds

March 10, San Francisco

Joe Morlan, author and ornithology instructor at San Francisco State, on the birds and wildlife of Australia

March 16, Berkeley

Leora Feeney, chair of the Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge, on the challenges of creating the refuge

April 14, San Francisco

April 20, Berkeley

Sean Rovito, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley

May 12, San Francisco

Eleanor Briccetti, Bay Area photographer specializing in birds and other wildlife around the world

May 18, Berkeley

Hans and Pam Peeters, authors of *Raptors of California*

FIELD TRIPS

Susan Groves



Arrowhead Marsh Bilingual Family Trip

Oakland

Fridays, November 4, December 2

Leaders: Olga Rojas and Susan Groves, 510.654.5954, groves.susan@gmail.com

Meet at 3:30 p.m. in front of lookout structure at Arrowhead Marsh. We'll restore critical salt marsh habitat for shorebirds and endangered Clapper Rails. We'll also check out the birds, so bring binoculars or use ours. Trip will be conducted in Spanish and English. All ages are welcome. Trip ends at 5:30 p.m. Students can earn community service hours for these trips.

Take I-880 to Hegenberger exit and go west on Hegenberger to Doolittle Dr. Turn right on Doolittle, then right onto Swan Way and left into MLK, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park. Drive to end for Arrowhead Marsh parking lot.

Birding for Everyone

*San Francisco Botanical Garden at
Strybing Arboretum*

Saturdays, November 5, December 3

Leaders: Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis, SF Nature Education; Darin Dawson, SF Botanical Garden docent, 415.387.9160

Meet at 10 a.m. at kiosk/bookstore at front gate of Botanical Garden, Ninth Ave. at Lincoln Way. Trip ends at noon. Families welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum

Sundays, November 6, December 4

Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall, 650.349.3780

For this half-day trip, meet at 8 a.m. at front gate of Botanical Garden. The garden has several micro-habitats that attract an array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds.

Wednesday at Arrowhead Marsh

Oakland

Wednesday, November 9

Leader: Courtenay Peddle, 510.532.8911 (call after 9 a.m.), capeddle@there.net

Meet at Arrowhead Marsh parking lot at 9:30 a.m. to study and enjoy wintering birds. Up to 14 species of ducks and possibly Clapper Rails. Bring a scope if you have one. See Nov. 4 trip for directions.

Valle Vista/Upper San Leandro Reservoir

Moraga

Saturday, November 12

Leader: Denise Wight, 510. 547.6822 (w), 925.377.0951 (h), blkittiwake@yahoo.com

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Valle Vista Staging Area for a half-day trip. Grassy hills, pines, oaks, and open water provide varied habitats for land birds and waterfowl. Rain cancels.

Take Hwy. 24 to Orinda and exit on Moraga Way. Continue about 4 miles to Canyon Rd. Turn right at traffic signal and continue 1.2 miles to Valle Vista Staging Area on left.

Aquatic Park

San Francisco

Sunday, November 13

Leader: Carol Kiser, SF Maritime National Historical Park ranger, 415.561.7100 or 561.7104

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at foot of Hyde Street Pier for 2-hour beginners' walk to discover birds in the urban environment. Dress in layers. Trip is wheelchair accessible.

Arrowhead Marsh

Oakland

Sunday, November 13

Leaders: Pamela Llewellyn, 510.843.7904, seacreature219@sbcglobal.net; Michael Butler, 510.684.3375, mjbkl@earthlink.net

Meet at 8:30 a.m. for a walk along water's edge looking for wintering shorebirds, ducks, raptors, passerines, and Clapper Rails. See Nov. 4 trip for directions.

Western Golden Gate Park Bird Walk

San Francisco

Sunday, November 20

Leader: David Armstrong, 415.305.7681 (cell), armstrong99@yahoo.com

A walking tour of western Golden Gate Park, covering up to 5 miles of mostly flat terrain (with a few short climbs) on both paved and unpaved trails. Meet at 8 a.m. at parking lot for Middle and South Lakes (on Chain of Lakes Drive south of John F. Kennedy Drive). Trip finishes around noon. Wear good walking shoes, and bring a snack and water. Rain cancels.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

Wednesday, November 23

Leaders: Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066; Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093, ruthtobey@earthlink.net; Travis Hails

Meet at 9:30 a.m. on lake side of Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue Sts. We'll look around, then go down lake or up path from Nature Center to Children's Fairyland. Trip ends at around noon.

Bus: Take 12, N, or NL to Grand and Perkins and walk into park on Perkins. **Car:** Park in free lot at boathouse, 568 Bellevue. From lot, walk past art center to far side of bird yard with freshwater ponds.



Contact Susan Groves, Field Trips Coordinator, at 510.654.5954 or grovesusan@gmail.com:

- if you can share a ride or if you need a ride,
- if you have difficulty reaching a leader and need information,
- if you have suggestions for trips, or
- if you are interested in leading a trip.

key



Carpool



Entrance fee required



Biking trip

Eastshore State Park Clapper Rail Run

Richmond El Cerrito

Wednesday, November 23

Leader: Bob Lewis, 510.845.5001,
rlewis0727@aol.com

This trip will take place at dusk along Bay Trail in the new Eastshore State Park. We will look at shorebird flocks, but our primary focus will be to hear the park's Clapper Rails. Meet at Rydin Road entrance to Point Isabel at 4:30 p.m. We'll walk the round-trip to Meeker Slough in Richmond and back, a total of 1.5–2 miles. Rain cancels.

From Hwy 580, take Central Ave. toward Costco. Turn right on Rydin Road, first turn after highway. Go to end of road to parking lot.

Berkeley Waterfront

Saturday, November 26

Leader: Anne Hoff, 510.845.5908,
Anne2210b@sbcglobal.net

Meet at 9 a.m. at north end of Hs. Lordship's Restaurant parking lot for a half-day stroll through (or around) several habitats. Many small land birds will be wintering, and we can count on ducks and gulls. Maybe the annual wintering Burrowing Owl will have checked in to its Cesar Chavez Park haunt. We will sample the new Eastshore State Park adjacent to marina. Heavy rain cancels.

Lake Merritt

Oakland

Saturdays, November 27

Leader: Travis Hails, 510.451.1207 (no calls after 9 p.m.), travishails@yahoo.com

Meet at 8 a.m. at large spherical cage near Nature Center at Perkins and Bellevue Sts. Focus will be on ducks and other water birds of Lake Merritt. See Nov. 23 trip for directions.

FIELD TRIPS, continued on page 12

Is The Gull Arriving Late?

If you fail to receive *The Gull* the first week of the month, another copy can be mailed first class by calling the GGA office at 510.843.2222. Note that the next month's field trips and Speaker Series programs are available online by the middle of the preceding month.

Bicycle Trips

Leader: Kathy Jarrett

510.547.1233 (call for cell number, no calls after 9 p.m.), kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com
Bicycle helmet required. Rain cancels.

Berkeley to Richmond on the SF Bay Trail

Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

Saturday, November 5, 2005

Meet at 8:15 a.m. at south end of Aquatic Park at Bay and Potter Sts. at southernmost pond for this introduction to Eastshore State Park. We will bird at Aquatic Park, Eastshore State Park, Point Isabel, Richmond Marina Bay, and all along SF Bay Trail from Berkeley to Richmond. Bring sunscreen, lunch, and liquids. Food and drink available at Richmond Marina Bay and Point Isabel. Bring bicycle lock.

Car: From San Pablo Ave. in Berkeley just south of Ashby Ave., turn west toward bay on 67th St., then right on Bay St. (extension of Shellmound St., Emeryville) just past train tracks. Go to end, past Potter St. to a small parking lot on right. Bicycle back to first pond. **Transit:** Northbound train arrives at Ashby BART at 7:39 a.m. Southbound train arrives at North Berkeley BART at 7:45. Aquatic Park is an easy ride from station.

Redwood Shores—Foster City

San Mateo County

Saturday, November 19

Meet at 8:50 a.m. at Belmont Caltrain Station or 9:15 a.m. at Island Park (near Belmont Sports Complex just north of Marine Parkway) in Belmont. We should find birds on bay, lagoons, lakes, and sewer ponds. This circuit of Redwood Shores is a flat 11-mile loop on Bay Trail and other bike paths, mostly paved, some on bike lanes on city streets. Trip continues to mid-afternoon, with optional extension to Foster City. Dress in layers, and bring lunch and liquids.

Car: From Hwy. 101 in Belmont, exit at Ralston/Marine Parkway and go east toward bay for .4 mile. Turn left at first light east of freeway, left at next intersection (stop sign), and then right into a parking area. **BART and Caltrain:** The BART schedule has changed, and only direct train to Millbrae leaves from Dublin/Pleasanton, not from Pittsburg/Baypoint. Train arriving 8:01 a.m. at Millbrae leaves Dublin/Pleasanton at 6:38. To transfer, board at Rockridge at 6:50 a.m. (MacArthur 6:54) and arrive Embarcadero at 7:10; transfer to Millbrae train arriving 7:21 on same platform and arrive 8:01 at Millbrae. Transfer to southbound Caltrain at 8:24. On Richmond-Fremont line, arrive MacArthur 6:54 a.m. and make direct transfer to Daly City train; transfer to Millbrae train at Embarcadero as above. From S.F., board southbound Caltrain at 8 a.m. at 4th and King, arriving 8:43 at Belmont. Northbound Caltrain leaves San Jose at 8 a.m. and arrives 8:48 at Belmont. On Caltrain use northernmost car, reserved for bicycles in both directions. Northbound trains leave Belmont hourly: 1:48 p.m. train arrives 4th and King, SF at 2:36. Southbound 1:43 p.m. train from Belmont arrives San Jose at 2:36. BART is on a 20-minute schedule.

Arrowhead Marsh

Alameda County

Saturday, December 3

Meet at 7:50 a.m. at Fruitvale BART Station in Oakland or at 8:10 at East Creek Point parking area. Trip ends around noon, with a possible extension around Bay Farm Island. This is a loop from Fruitvale BART Station to SF Bay Trail at East Creek Point, Damon Marsh, Arrowhead Marsh, and Doolittle Pond Wildlife Sanctuary, bicycle/pedestrian bridge from Bay Farm Island, to Alameda and Fernside Blvd., Fruitvale Bridge, and back to station. We'll look for shorebirds and ducks on marsh and bay, riding mainly on trails and on roads with bicycle lanes. Bring snacks and liquids; dress for cool, windy weather. Exit I-880 at High St., Oakland and go .25 mi. southwest toward High St. bridge to Alameda. Just before bridge, turn left onto Tidewater Ave. and go .25 mi. East Creek Point parking area is accessed to right. Fruitvale BART Station in Oakland is south of Fruitvale Ave. between East 12th St. and San Leandro Blvd.

Note: Public transit schedules can be viewed online at www.transitinfo.org.

OBSERVATIONS

September 1–30, 2005
Bruce Mast



Fall migration is arguably California's best birding season and September offered ample reasons to get out in the field. Western migrants, pelagic trips, streams of raptors, and the occasional eastern vagrant all provided renewed interest and challenge.

Loons to Ducks

Fall pelagic birding continued strong this month with 3 trips to Bodega Cyn. and the Cordell Bank (MRN/SON) on Sept. 9, 16, and 25. The Sept. 25 trip racked up 70 Black-footed Albatrosses, 560 Northern Fulmars, 300 Buller's Shearwaters, a couple Wilson's Storm-Petrels, and 150 Ashy Storm-Petrels (DeS; mob). The Sept. 9 trip tallied 4,200 Pink-footed, 2,200 Sooty, and a couple Short-tailed Shearwaters (DeS; mob). The Sept. 16 trip recorded a Cook's Petrel and good numbers of other pelagics (DeS; mob). On the 15th, an Ashy Storm-Petrel provided welcome relief to Giants fans at SBC Park, SF (JB, CM, RLV). The hated Dodgers won, 7-1.

A White-faced Ibis paid a rare visit to S. L. Merced in SF on the 24th (RFi, JM). The Alcatel Pond in Petaluma, SON, hosted an Emperor Goose and a blue-morph Snow Goose on the 21st. The latter lingered through the 29th (SaB; mob). Harlequin Ducks were observed in Sausalito, MRN, on the 25th (RiH) and at Coyote Pt., SM, on the 30th (RTh).

Raptors to Alcids

Raptor migration became serious business this month, particularly for songbird-dependent accipiters. Accipiter counts at Hawk Hill, MRN, peaked at 429 on the 26th. The next day, Broad-winged Hawk tallies topped out at 54 (mob). Ferruginous Hawks made the dash across the Golden Gate from Hawk Hill on the 10th, 18th, 19th, and 25th (NW, StB, EPr, JM; mob). A juvenile Ferruginous was also observed over the north fields at Las Gallinas Sewage Ponds, MRN, on the 22nd (KK). A Prairie

Falcon was reported from Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN, Sept. 23–24 (RoH; RSt). Also on the 24th, observers in both SF and MRN observed a Prairie Falcon crossing the Golden Gate.

A Sept. 24 PRBO Bird-a-thon in SON tallied 170 species, including a Blue Grouse on King's Ridge Rd. (MP). A Black Rail was the most recent rarity to turn up at Arrowhead Marsh, ALA, where it was seen on the 7th and heard on the 24th (DK; JL). Up to 7 Pacific Golden-Plovers frequented Abbott's Lagoon (PRNS, MRN) and the nearby plateaus of the Point Reyes peninsula this month (RSt; KA) and up to 4 were seen sporadically at Shollenberger Park, SON (AlW; BD, MP). Beginning the 13th, a Solitary Sandpiper spent a week at Los Alamitos Recharge Pond, SCL (ST; mob). Baird's Sandpipers continued through the 4th at 4 locales and a single Baird's turned up at Heron's Head, SF, on the 19th (AH, DA). Pectoral Sandpipers were widely reported, with as many as 17 individuals at Abbott's Lagoon Sept. 22–24 (LLo; RoH, RSt). A single Sharp-tailed Sandpiper joined the Pectorals at Abbott's Lagoon on the 22nd (LLo). The Stilt Sandpiper at New Chicago Marsh, SCL, remained through the 22nd (mob). A juvenile Buff-breasted Sandpiper spent 4 days at nearby Salt Pond A16, starting the 5th (MRo; mob). Another Buff-breasted at SEFI Sept. 9–18 was just the 9th record for that location (MaB; oob).

The pelagic trips logged decent numbers of South Polar Skuas, Jaegers, and Sabine's Gulls. Sept. 9 and 25 trips added Tufted Puffin. From shore, a Pigeon Pt., SM, seawatch on the 29th noted 2 Pomarine Jaegers (RTh). Parasitics were reported from several coastside and bayside locales, including Coyote Pt., SM (RTh); Don Edwards NWR, SCL (MRo, MM, RJ); and Richardson Bay, MRN (DL). Coyote Pt. produced the only bayside Sabine's Gull sighting on the 22nd (RTh). Up to 6 Common Terns were observed at 3 SM

bayside locations Sept 4–23 (RTh; AE) and another lingered at Bodega Bay, SON, Sept. 16–18 (MP, AJ). By far the most tantalizing tern was studied at Richardson Bay, MRN, Sept. 27–28. Described as all-dark above and all white below, with white trailing trim and white collar, it was identified as a possible **White-winged Black Tern** (*Chlidonias leucopterus*), which breeds in eastern Europe and Turkey (DL, RSt). Finally, a pale-billed aleid off Candlestick Pt. SRA, SF, on the 18th was ID'd as an Ancient Murrelet (MiB). A 2nd Ancient was reported the next day at Emeryville Peninsula, ALA (PSD).



Prairie Warbler.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Doves to Thrashers

A Yellow-billed Cuckoo at Owl Cyn., Bodega Harbor, SON, on Sept. 17–18 satisfied lots of watchers (LLi, CLi; mob), whereas a Cuckoo at Drake's Beach, PRNS, MRN, on the 24th left most birders frustrated (TC; RSt). A lingering Black Swift passed over Shiloh Ranch RP, SON, on the 12th (DoS). A Costa's Hummingbird trekked out to Pierre Pt., Tomales Bay, MRN, on the 3rd (RSt).

Migration watchers throughout the region tallied 7 Least, 4 Hammond's, and 5 Dusky Flycatchers, along with 6 Tropical Kingbirds. A Cassin's Kingbird spent a day behind the Nob Hill Market in Redwood Shores, SM, on the 20th (RTh) and an immature Eastern Kingbird checked out Muir Beach, MRN, on the 7th (DMK). On the 25th, close observation revealed a Plumbeous Vireo in the willows at Rodeo Lagoon, MRN (JM; mob). Beginning around the

12th, Philadelphia Vireos turned up at Owl Cyn., Bodega Harbor, SON (DnN, MP), S. L. Merced, SF (AdW; mob); and Stevens Cr. at L'Avenida, SCL (TGr). Meanwhile, a Red-eyed Vireo was found at Middle L., GGP, SF, on the 16th (AdW). On the 27th, PRNO banders netted an **Arctic Warbler** (*Phylloscopus borealis*) at SEFI (RB; oob). A Townsend's Solitaire dispersed to Half Moon Bay, SM, on the 21st (ADM) and another sought out the fruiting shrubs at Upton and Kobbe in the Presidio, SF, on the 26th (KR). A **Sprague's Pipit** (*Anthus spragueii*) was seen and heard calling as it flew over Twin Peaks, SF, on the 30th (BF).

Wood Warblers to Finches

Many CA vagrants are hatch-year birds from Canada's boreal forests that end up here when they migrate southwest instead of southeast. A notable exception was an adult male **Red-faced Warbler** (*Cardellina rubrifrons*), discovered on the 11th at Del Valle RP, ALA (SHu). It apparently migrated north from its home range in AZ and Mexico. Other remarkable vagrants included a **Blue-winged Warbler** (*Vermivora pinus*), described Sept. 10 at Mt. Davidson, SF (MiB); and a **Connecticut Warbler** (*Oporornis agilis*) banded by the PRBO on the 7th at Pine Gulch Cr. on Bolinas Lagoon, MRN (TGa). PRBO observers at SEFI documented a **Connecticut Warbler** (*Oporornis agilis*) Sept. 3–18 and a **Mourning Warbler** (*Oporornis philadelphia*) on the 9th (MaB; oob). Reports of many warblers species were too numerous to include in the warbler tables.

The season's first Summer Tanager arrived at Mendoza Ranch, PRNS, MRN, on the 2nd (RTe). Two Green-tailed Towhees made it to SEFI on the 18th (MaB; oob) and another spent 3 days at the Fish Docks (PRNS) starting the 19th (TGa; EPa, DC). Clay-colored and Brewer's Sparrows were widely reported. Vesper Sparrows were ID'd near Gazos Cr. SB, SM, on the 3rd (RTh); at S. L. Merced, SF Sept. 16–18 (AdW; mob); and at SEFI Sept. 9–18 (MaB; oob). Also at SEFI, a Black-throated Sparrow was noted Sept. 2–9 (AB; oob).

A Sept. 25 visitor to Lobos Dunes, Presidio, SF, reported a Lark Bunting in the

Wood Warbler Sightings

Virginia's Warbler			9/24	S. L. Merced, SF	Rf, JM
9/17	PRBO banding station at Lagunitas Cr., MRN	IGa	9/29	Rodeo Lagoon, MRN	BBa, LLo
Northern Parula			9/29	Candlestick Pt., SRA, SF	DA
9/7	Battery Wagner Rd. and Storey Rd., Presidio, SF	MZ	Black-and-white Warbler		
Magnolia Warbler			9/10	Phipp's Ranch, SM	RTh
9/5	Hole-In-the Head, Bodega Head, SON	AIW	9/12	Beach Chalet, GGP, SF	DA
9/7	Rd. Fork Pool, PRNS, MRN	JWe	9/13	Lighthouse, PRNS, MRN	BiL
9/12	Campbell Cove, Bodega Harbor, SON	DnN	9/13	N. L., GGP, SF	DMu
9/21–23	Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN	EPa, DC; RoH	9/17	Campbell Cove, Bodega Harbor, SON	DB, PaB
Prairie Warbler			9/18–22	Owl Cyn., Bodega Harbor, SON	JR, mob
9/2–18	SEFI, SF	AB; oob	9/25	Gazos Cr. Rd., SM	LB
9/3	Sunset Circle, N. L. Merced, SF	HC, EPr, PS	Ovenbird		
9/11–17	Owl Cyn., Bodega Harbor, SON	AIW, MP, TE; mob	9/9–18	SEFI, SF	MaB, oob
9/19–21	Granelli Ave., Half Moon Bay, SM	AJ; mob	9/12	Old RCA Station, PRNS, MRN	RSt
9/25	Old RCA Station, PRNS, MRN	KA	Hooded Warbler		
Palm Warbler			9/8–12	Doran Dunes Campground, Bodega Bay, SON	DnN
9/20	Copeland Cr., SON State University, SON	GM	9/13–16	Nunes Ranch, PRNS, MRN, BiL	JR, RSt
			9/13	Redwood Cr. at Highway 1, TGa	oob, MRN
			Canada Warbler		
			9/4	Middle L., GGP, SF	HC, AH
			9/24	Historic F Ranch, PRNS, MRN	KA

Abbreviations for Observers: AB, Adam Brown; ADM, Al DeMartini; AdW, Adam Winer; AE, Al Eisner; AH, Alan Hopkins; AJ, Alvaro Jaramillo; AIW, Alan Wight; BBa, Bob Battagin; BBr, Bob Bradniff; BD, Bob Dyer; BF, Brian Fitch; BiL, Bill Lenarz; BoL, Bob Lewis; BP, Bob Power; BR, Bob Richmond; ChC, Chns Conrad; CL, Cindy Leurance; CLo, Calvin Lou; CM, Clyde Morns; CM, Chns MacIntosh; CW, Chnstine Wolfe; DA, David Armstrong; DB, Dennis Braddy; DC, Daryl Coldren; DDS, David DeSantes; DeS, David Shearwater; DeW, Denise Wight; DH, David Hofmann; DK, Dan Karp; DL, David Lukas; DMA, Dean Maney; DMI, David McIntyre; DMK, David MacKenzie; DMu, Dan Murphy; DnN, Dan Nelson; DoS, Doug Shaw; DvN, David Nelson; DWE, Dave Weber; DWI, Dave Wimpfheimer; EPa, Ed Pandolfino; EPr, Eric Preston; ES, Emilie Strauss; GD, Gary Deghi; GM, Gerald Muger; GO, Ger Ong; HC, Hugh Cotter; JB, Joelle Buffa; JL, John Luther; JM, Joe Morlan; JP, Janna Pauser; JR, Jean Richmond; JWe, John Westlake; JWh, Jim White; KA, Ken Archimbaud; KK, Kanani Kauka; KL, Kimya Lambert; KO, Kns Olson; KP, Kathy Parker; KR, Kathy Robertson; LB, Leonie Batkin; LH, Lisa Hug; LLI, Les Leurance; LLo, Laura Look; LM, Lisa Myers; LS, Lang Stevens; MaB, Matt Brady; MD, Matthew Dodder; ME, Mark Eaton; MF, Mike Feighner; MiB, Michelle Brodie; MM, Mike Mammoser; MP, Mike Parmeter; MRa, Mark Rauzon; MRo, Mike Rogers; MU, Myra Ulvang; MZ, Matt Zlatunich; NWA, Nathaniel Wander; NWh, Nick Whelan; PaB, Patricia Braddy; PD, Peggy Don; PhB, Phil Brown; PK, Pat Kenney; PM, Peter Metropulos; PS, Paul Saraceni; PSD, Peter S. D.; RB, Ryan Bennett; RFe, Rich Ferrick; Rfi, Robbie Fischer; RiH, Rick Hallway; RJ, Richard Jeffers; RK, Roland Kenner; RLV, Ron LeValley; RoH, Roger Harshaw; RR, Ruth Rudesill; RSt, Rich Stallcup; RTe, Ryan Terrill; RTh, Ron Thorn; SaB, Sara Blauman; SHo, Scott Hoppe; SHu, Steve Huckabone; SRO, Steve Rottenborn; ST, Scott Terrill; StB, Steve Bauer; SuB, Susan Barnes; TB, Tim Behr; TC, Terry Colborn; TE, Ted Eliot; TGa, Thomas Gardali; TGr, Tom Grey; TH, Tony Harrow; WL, William Legge; WW, Will Wilson.

Semicolons separate original observers from subsequent observers. Abbreviation "mob" = many observers; "oob" = other observer. Information compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; BBA, Breeding Bird Atlas; CBC, Chnstmas Bird Count; CC, Contra Costa; CCFS, Coyote Creek Field Station; Cr., Creek; Cyn., Canyon; DENWR, Don Edwards SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge; EEC, Environmental Education Center; Ft., Fort; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L., Lake; MDSP, Mount Diablo State Park; Mt. Mount; MRN, Marin; N., North; NAP, Napa; NSMWA, Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; Pt., Point; PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore; RP, Regional Park; Rd., Road; Res, Reservoir; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SEFI, SE Farallon Island; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve; WPCP, Water Pollution Control Plant.

lupines (MiB). Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were everywhere and Blue Grosbeaks were observed through the 12th at PRNS, (RSt); SEFI (MaB; oob); and Coyote Pt. (RTh). An Indigo Bunting was ID'd on the 19th in the East Wash at Lincoln Park, SF (DMu; HC). A first-winter female Dickcissel drew birders to the intersection of Upton and Kobbe in the Presidio Sept. 15–23 (AdW; mob). A Dickcissel made the SEFI vagrant list on the 18th (MaB; oob). Up to 3 Bobolinks made the same list on the 9th and 18th (MaB; oob). Bobolinks wandered out to the

Mendoza Ranch and Lighthouse at PRNS on the 7th and 24th respectively (DvN, RSt). In SF, a Yellow-headed Blackbird turned the Marina Green parking lot into a birding destination Sept. 10–14 (PS, EPr, mob). SEFI remained off-limits to casual birders, despite the Yellow-headed Blackbird that visited on the 2nd (AB; oob). Through the 18th, 5 or 6 Orchard Orioles stopped in at various SF and MRN locales (mob). A Baltimore Oriole visited the East Wash at Lincoln Park on the 2nd (BF) and another made the Sept. 18 SEFI report (MaB; oob).

BACKYARD BIRDER

Meg Pauletich



My file on the Christmas Bird Count is the fattest of all. In looking through it, I discovered a bird list from the first count I did with my 10-year-old son on December 15, 1971. We tallied the birds we saw in our neighborhood, which was on the edge of the Oakland count circle. We had moved to Orinda in 1969, and the area was full of wildlife: deer aplenty, raccoons peeking in our windows, flocks of quail shuffling among the seeds scattered by jays at the feeder. There were many birdsongs and scolding notes that intrigued me. I had to know which bird sounded like a big beetle (a Spotted Towhee) and which made the bouncing Ping-Pong ball sound (a Wren-tit). I took a birding class, and I was hooked.

By 1971, feeling I could adequately identify my local birds, I signed up for my first Christmas Bird Count (CBC). I find it interesting to note that my son and I saw 32 species representing 1,117 individuals in the 5 hours we counted. I duly noted that the day started at 8 a.m. with tule fog, followed by sunshine after 11. The count has become a tradition I haven't missed since. Our team now has four or five stalwarts, and we cover many more habitats, spotting an average of 65 species in eight or nine hours.

The CBC began more than a century ago as an alternative to hunting birds. Over the years, the annual count has become a valuable tool in tracking trends in the population and abundance of bird species. We're all aware of the peril of almost losing certain species. Brown Pelicans, Peregrine Falcons, and Bald Eagles were rapidly disappearing because of the use of pesticides, which contaminated water sources and entered the food chain. The birds ingested the pesticides through fish and other foods. The poisons caused the shells of their eggs to break under their weight. California Condors came close to extinction due to

their habit of eating prey shot with lead ammunition. The decline of these bird populations became apparent during annual bird tallies. This led to banning DDT in the United States and to prohibiting the sale of lead ammunition. Sadly, DDT is still used in underdeveloped countries where some of birds found in the United States spend time. The peril remains.

All sorts of habitats are involved in the East Bay and San Francisco counts: the bay itself, shorelines, marshes, grasslands, redwood forests, oak and riparian areas. We have almost all of the habitats you can imagine except alpine and desert areas. We are fortunate, indeed. In Alaska a bird counter gets excited if a species other than a Common Raven shows up. Weather doesn't matter to diehard birders, who do the count rain or shine. Luckily, in the many years of my counting, it has rained no more than four times on CBC day. At the end of the day, the counters in each circle meet to share a warm dinner and the day's tallies, along with tall tales.

I've been writing this column since 1980 and have led my area's count since about 1985. Every year we recall past sightings. Last year we had two unusual birds: a Red-naped Sapsucker and a white morph Snow Goose. Another year my sharp-eyed pal Johan correctly identified a Townsend's-Hermit Warbler hybrid. "Remember the year it was so cold we finally saw a American Dipper in our creek?" "Remember when we saw a Hairy Woodpecker and a Downy Woodpecker sitting side by side in the bare oak?" "I'll never forget the flock of Snow Geese against the clear blue sky that crisp morning in 1988!"

These kinds of memories can be yours if you join in the fun! Just sign up and revel in birding with other fans of the avian world. There are birds to see, friends to make, and

tips to learn. All we need are your eyes—the more, the better. Every count day is like a birding treasure hunt. You never know what you will see!

There is another important way you can participate in the CBC. Rather than go out in the field, some birders watch their own backyards and feeders from the warmth and comfort of their homes. There have been days when my count group lunched at my house and observed a missing species at one of my feeders. The only time we've found a Northern Harrier on count day was the one flying over my house. You might find a bird you've not seen before at your very own feeder or in your yard. So why not sign up to



Downy Woodpecker.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

be a backyard counter? The idea is to have as many eyes as possible scanning their surroundings on count day.

The day will come when I will have to pass the torch to someone else who will lead my count group. But I intend to be glued to my most comfortable chair with my binoculars strapped to my head! I don't want to miss a single year, so I guess the CBC is a passion. Why don't you get passionate, too?

To sign up for the CBC, go to Birding & Wildlife Resources on the Golden Gate Audubon website, www.goldengateaudubon.org.

BIRD COUNT, continued from page 1

The San Francisco count circle includes the north tower of the Golden Gate Bridge and all of San Francisco, and reaches down the peninsula to San Bruno Mountain and the wetlands north of San Francisco International Airport. Also blessed with a wide variety of habitats, the San Francisco count records upward of 160 species. Both counts have ranked among the top 25 nationwide in numbers of species found.

"Having a large number of participants is the key to finding a large number of species, of course," Dave says. "Participants can search for birds from dawn to dusk—or longer if they look for owls, as I always do. If you join a group in the field, an experienced leader will assign you to an area that suits your interests and your abilities. If your time is limited, you can still help by spending even a few hours noting birds around your house or your workplace, or in a nearby

park. Yard watchers are wanted, too. Some bird species are found more often at feeders than elsewhere."

Golden Gate Audubon's two Christmas Counts are a popular tradition. Oakland usually attracts 150-plus field observers, and San Francisco more than 80.

Both bird counts finish the day with a festive group dinner. Everyone is invited: field counters, yard watchers, and anyone else who wants to join the fun. "The dinners are great: good, healthy food and lots of it, and inexpensive, too," Dave says. "They're a great opportunity to share your experiences in the field, hear from the other count areas, learn how many species we recorded, and find out where the rare birds were found."

Golden Gate Audubon hospitality chair Susanne Shields will plan and serve the dinners again this year. Working in partnership with Project Open Hand, another nonprofit, Susanne promises that everyone will go

home full of good, nutritious food as well as memories of a good day of birding.

How You Can Help

If you would like to participate and need an invitation, call the Golden Gate Audubon office (510.843.2222) to request one or sign up at www.goldengateaudubon.org (go to Christmas Bird Count under Birding & Wildlife Resources). When you sign up for the CBC dinner in advance, you pay a reduced price.

For further information, call Dave Quady, 510.704.9353, or Bob Lewis, 510.845.5001, for the Oakland count. Call Alan Hopkins, 415.664.0983, for the San Francisco count.

Volunteers willing to help collect money at the dinners, as well as serve, set up, and clean up, are needed. Please call Susanne Shields at 415.810.4900 if you would like to assist.

Give a Gift that Helps Local Wildlife

PLEASE GIVE A GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

This holiday season, present your nature-loving friends and family members with a gift they will enjoy the whole year. Through a one-year gift membership to Golden Gate Audubon, your friends or family will receive *The Gull*—informing them about GGA's conservation projects, field trips, and Speaker Series—and a 10 percent discount at our Nature Store. Gift members will receive a welcome letter informing them of their membership. To purchase a gift membership, fill out the form below and return it to our office, or call 510.843.2222.

PLEASE SELECT A MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

- ☐ **Student** \$20
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- ☐ **Least Tern** \$200–499
- ☐ **Peregrine Falcon** \$500–999
- ☐ **Golden Eagle** \$1,000+

- ☐ I would also like to include a donation to support GGA's conservation, education and birding programs.

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- ☐ My check, payable to **Golden Gate Audubon Society**, is enclosed.
☐ Please charge my credit card: ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

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☐ Please do not share these names with any other organization.

Your contributions to Golden Gate Audubon are fully tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

Eastshore State Park

Albany

Sunday, December 4

Leader: Michael Butler, 510.684.3375,
mjbkl@earthlink.net

Meet at 10 a.m. at west end of Buchanan, next to racetrack. We'll bird Albany Bulb and adjacent areas to learn about the new park and to seek birds to add to the park's bird list.

Go west on Marin Ave and cross San Pablo, where Marin becomes Buchanan. Continue under freeway toward the racetrack. Park in lot at end of road.

Gray Lodge and Sacramento Wildlife Refuges

Sutter, Butte, and Glenn Counties

Saturday and Sunday, December 10–11

Leaders: Steve and Renee Margolin,
530.342.6476

We'll look for wintering geese (four species), Tundra Swans, a variety of ducks, raptors, and Sandhill Cranes. Meet on Sat. at 9 a.m. in lot #14 at Gray Lodge Wildlife Refuge. We'll caravan through, then visit other sites in Sutter, Butte, and Glenn Counties. On

Livermore Valley Threatened Again

On November 8, Livermore residents will be asked to vote on Measure D, an initiative that would permit a massive residential development of 2,450 homes to be built on scenic agricultural and open space lands in North Livermore, outside the city's urban growth boundary. The initiative is sponsored by the developer, Pardee Homes, and is in direct opposition to the goals of Alameda County's Measure D, which established urban growth boundaries in various cities and towns. Measure D was passed overwhelmingly by county voters in 2000. Livermore voters have fought and defeated development in the serene North Livermore Valley five times since 1969. In July, the Golden Gate Audubon board of directors voted unanimously to oppose Measure D on the November ballot.

How You Can Help

In these last few days before the election, there is still time to volunteer or send a contribution to defeat Measure D through the Friends of Livermore Committee, 1141 Catalina Drive, #23, Livermore, CA 94550; 925.245.0342; www.friendsoflivermore.org.

Sun., we'll meet at 9 a.m. in visitors' parking lot at Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. Allow 2.5-hours driving from Bay Area. For accommodations, try Blue Gum Willows Motel or Best Western in Willows, or Jean's Riverside B & B in Oroville. There is no lodge in Gray Lodge. Bring lunch, snacks, liquids, scopes, and clothes for cold temperatures; wind and rain possible. Heavy rain cancels. You may join for one or both days.

To Gray Lodge: Drive east on I-80 15 mi. beyond Davis to Rte. 99 exit. Go north 52 mi. on Rte. 99 to Gridley. Turn left (west) on Sycamore, which becomes Colusa Hwy.; continue 5 mi. to Pennington Rd. Turn left and follow signs. Or, take Hwy. 99 to Live Oak (south of Gridley). Go west on Pennington Rd.; follow west and then north (it may be called Almond Orchard Road) to Gray Lodge. Go through checking station to lot #14. **To Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge:** From I-5, take Princeton exit just north of Glenn Co. line and follow signs to refuge. [\$]

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The Gull is the official newsletter of Golden Gate Audubon Society. As a Supporting Member of Golden Gate Audubon, you receive a subscription to *The Gull*, a 10 percent discount on all items purchased at our nature store, and the satisfaction of supporting local conservation efforts. Local members of the National Audubon Society are encouraged to join Golden Gate Audubon directly. Contact our office at 510.843.2222 for details.

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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